

SPHINX OCELLATA.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Antennæ medio crassiores, seu utraque extremitate attenuatæ, subprismaticæ.

Alæ deflexæ (*Volatu* graviore vespertino seu matutino.)

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 796.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS, &c.

SPHINX alis repandis : posticis ocellatis.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 796.

SPHINX alis angulatis : posticis rufis, ocello cœruleo.

Fabr. Syst. Ent. p. 536.

Scopoli. Entomol. Carniol. p. 182.

Plurimas quæ infectis hujus classis accidentunt, mutationes peculiari quadam lætitia solemus contemplari physici. Quamvis enim philosopho rem penitus intuiti satis constet animal idem esse, nec adeo immutari ut fiat alterum; sed partes tantum gradatim explicari quæ sub forma infecti longe aliter apparentis latuerunt; non possumus tamen non admirari, nostramque e mortuis resuscitationem Papilionis metamorphosi plane obumbratam agnoscere.

Antiqui

Antiqui sane varias Papilionum vices, illosque a morte temporaria redivivos intuentes, (ut verisimile est) quasi animæ symbolum habuerunt. Vox enim ψυχη et pro anima et papilione usurpat. Recentiores Physici historiam naturalem ad religionis usum recte convertentes, ab hisce insectis mire adeo permutatis humani corporis resurrectionem elucidare conantur. Exemplum tamen minus aptum feligunt, nempe Phalænam Mori, sive Sericam; utpote quæ nec sub terra immutatur, nec a morte accita, notabili est pulchritudine. At vero, inter omnia Naturæ phænomena, Sphinx, de qua jam agitur grandis et ultimæ humani corporis transformationis exemplum jure habeatur vividissimum. Eruca enim Sphingis, pabulo suo satiata, sub terra alte se occulit, ibi exuvias ponit, et veluti mortua menses multos jacet: his exactis, iterum ab humo attollitur: tumuli claustra deserit, et inter animalia unum e formosissimis erumpit. Ipsius certe Apostoli idea, merito ab omnibus laudata, quaque ad popularem captum nulla potest esse accommodatio, philosopho minus apta et vivida videtur, quam ejusdem mysterii elucidatio; de variis hujus insecti vicibus desumpta. Nec sane in omnibus suis operibus aliud clarissimum exemplum profert Natura.

De hac metamorphosi ita cecinit poeta anonymus.

Segnis et informis serpens eruca per herbas

Innocue viridi sustinet ora cibo.

Jam conviva satur, pertæsa et lumina vitæ

Quærit in effossa ponere corpus humo.

Exuit et vestem, ac cæcis commissâ latebris

Dormit, et in placida morte quieta manet.

I Hyberni

Hyberni frustra fugiunt per pascua venti,
Altaque nix rigido jam tenet arva gelu.
Illa nihil sentit, tumuloque occlusa profundo
Dormit, et a vento tuta, et ab hoste jacet.
At simul auratis aperit cum cornibus annum
Taurus, et a zephyris terra soluta viret,
Cum frondent sylvæ, cum formosissimus annus,
En! tumulo surgit pulchra phalæna suo!
Surgit, et ut veteris rumpit jam claustra sepulchri
Miratur speciem corporis ipsa sui.
Quam formosa vigens! O quantum distat ab illa
Viderat errantem quam prior annus humi!
Alarum ornatum, gemmantes aspice ocellos!
Jam pluma in molli corpore multa nitet:
Mille trahens varios adverso sole colores
Evolat, et cæcos despicit inde rogos.
Blandaque purpureis subvecta per aëra pennis
Per nemora et varios expatiatur agros.
Inque vices lectisque rosis violisque superbe
Incubat, et forma vincit utrasque sua.
Scilicet et nostri reputentur vana sepulchri
Præmia, cum tali teste probata manent?

Sphinx Ocellata, quam in adjuncta tabula pro exemplo generis depingi curavimus, insectorum quæ in Britannia nascentur, species est formosissima. Larva ejus super salices plerumque visa, sub initio mensis Augusti magnitudinem plenam adepta, sub terra se se pelit, et in chrysalidem mutatur, e qua, ineunte sequente Junio, phalæna ipsa erumpit.

THE
OCCELLATED SPHINX,
OR
EYED HAWK-MOTH.



GENERIC CHARACTER,

Antennæ thickest towards the middle, or attenuated at each extremity.

Wings deflected, *i. e.* sloping downwards on each side, when closed. (*Flight* generally in the morning and evening.)

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

SPHINX with repandous wings: the lower ones ocellated.

Lin. Syst. Nat.

The EYED HAWK-MOTH.

Albin. Ins. p. 8. f. 2.

The alteration of form during the different periods of life, which the insects of the Papilionaceous tribe undergo, affords a subject of the most pleasing contemplation to the mind of the Naturalist; and though a deeply philosophical survey demonstrates that there is



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is no real or absolute change produced in the identity of the creature itself, or that it is in reality only the gradual and progressive evolution of parts before concealed, and which lay masqued under the form of an insect of a widely different appearance, yet it is justly viewed with the highest admiration, and even generally acknowledged as in the most lively manner typical of the last eventful change.

If any regard is to be paid to a similarity of names, it should seem that the ancients were sufficiently struck with the transformations of the butterfly, and its revival from a seeming temporary death, as to have considered it as an emblem of the soul, the Greek word $\psi\chi\nu$ signifying both the soul and a butterfly.

Modern Natural Historians, impressed with the same idea, and laudably solicitous to apply it as an illustration of the awful mystery revealed in the sacred writings, have drawn their allusions to it from the dormant condition of the papilionaceous insects during their state of chrysalis, and their resuscitation from it : but they have unfortunately chosen a species the least proper for the purpose, *viz.* the Silkworm ; a species which neither undergoes its change under the surface of the earth, nor, when emerged from its tomb, is it an insect of any remarkable beauty ; but the larva, or caterpillar of the Sphinx, when satiate of the food allotted to it during that state, retires to a very considerable depth beneath the surface of the ground, where it divests itself of all appearance of its former state, and continues buried for several months, then rises to the surface, and bursts from the confinement of its tomb,

and

and commences a being of powers so comparatively exalted, and of beauty so superior, as to be one of the most elegant of the whole insect tribe.

Even the animated illustration taken from the vegetable world, so justly admired, as best calculated for general apprehension, must yield in the force of its similitude to that drawn from the insect's life, since Nature exhibits few phænomena that can equal so wonderful a transformation.

This metamorphosis is thus described by an anonymous poet.

The helpless crawling caterpillar trace,
From the first period of his reptile race.
Cloth'd in dishonour, on the leafy spray
Unseen he wears his silent hours away.
'Till satiate grown of all that life supplies,
Self-taught, the voluntary martyr dies.
Deep under earth his darkling course he bends,
And to the tomb, a willing guest, descends.
There long secluded in his lonely cell,
Forgets the sun, and bids the world farewell.
O'er the wide waste the wintry tempests reign,
And driving fnows usurp the frozen plain :
In vain the tempest beats, the whirlwind blows ;
No storms can violate his grave's repose.
But when revolving months have won their way,
When smile the woods, and when the zephyrs
play,
When laughs the vivid world in summer's bloom,
He bursts, and flies triumphant from the tomb.

And

And while his new-born beauties he displays,
With conscious joy his alter'd form surveys.
Mark, while he moves amid the sunny beam,
O'er his soft wings the varying lustre gleam.
Launch'd into air, on purple plumes he soars,
Gay Nature's face with wanton glance explores ;
Proud of his various beauties wings his way,
And spoils the fairest flow'rs, himself more fair
than they.

And deems weak Man the future promise vain,
When Worms can die, and glorious rise again ?

The Sphinx Ocellata, figured on the annexed plate, as an example of the genus, is perhaps the most beautiful insect which this country produces. The caterpillar is generally found on willows. It arrives at its full size towards the beginning of August, when it buries itself, and changes to a chrysalis, from which, about the first week in the following June, proceeds the moth.